

REGENERATION IN BAPTISM:

A PAPER

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A CONFERENCE HELD AT COLUMBUS, O.,

SEPTEMBER 13, 1871.

BY J. J. McELHINNEY.

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REGENERATION IN BAPTISM:

I. The formal or constitutive principle of Protestantism, the supreme authority of Holy Scripture, as over against the formal principle of Romanism, the supreme authority of Holy Church, explicitly affirmed as it is in the Formularies of all the churches of the Reformation, is set forth in the Anglican Confession with peculiar emphasis. The Articles of Religion declare that whatsoever is not read in Holy Scripture, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of the Faith, or be thought necessary or requisite to salvation ; and, not only that particular churches have erred, but that the Universal Church, as represented in General Councils may err, and sometimes has erred, so that things ordained by it as necessary to salvation have neither strength nor authority, unless it may be declared (*ostendi*, proved) that they be taken out of Holy Scriptures ; and further, that the Church, whether national or universal, “ *ought not* to decree anything against Holy Writ,—that it is *not lawful* for the Church to ordain anything that is contrary to God’s Word written.” (Art. vi. xix. xx. xxi.) These declarations are severally distinct affirmations of the individual Christian’s right of appeal in all questions of religion from the decrees or definitions of any Church, or of the Church Universal, to “the Word of God written” ; in other words, the right of determining, each “Christian man” for himself, the mind of the Spirit as revealed in Holy Scripture. “This church” thus solemnly enjoins it upon her children, one and all, to

receive no doctrine as an article of the Faith, upon the Church's authority; but to try her teaching by the touchstone of the infallible Word.

In the practical application of this principle, the English Reformers proceeded to cast off, one after another, a number of traditional corruptions in doctrine and discipline,—papal supremacy, transubstantiation, purgatory, pardon, invocation of saints, and other figments of mediæval superstition.

II. Clear and emphatic, however, as are the statements of the Anglican Confession in affirmation of the supremacy of Scripture, it is at the same time undeniable that patristic authority was permitted to exert a controlling influence in moulding the statements of the Anglican Formularies, both doctrinal and ritual. Not only were the three creeds, the two earlier in their present form the growth of the first four or five centuries, the third the product of the sixth, incorporated, without revision, in the reformed Liturgy, but the decisions of the first four "great Ecumenical Councils" so called, are authoritatively declared in a public document of the Reformation entitled to reverent acceptance. (Ref. Leg. c. xiv.) Reproached as they were by their Romanist assailants as broachers of novelties in religion, the Reformers were naturally eager to avail themselves of all the support that could possibly be derived from an authority to which their adversaries appealed as ultimate. All their writings, accordingly, abound with deferential reference to the Fathers of the early centuries; and so confident do they seem of the strength of their cause in the domain of patristics that they may easily be imagined uniting in the perilous appeal of JEWEL to the concordant witness of the Fathers of the first six centuries.

It is indeed unquestioned, as a matter of fact, that in framing the Formularies the Reformers had constantly before them, as a precedent, alike in doctrine and discipline,

the Church of the first four centuries; and that it was their conscientious aim to deviate as little as possible, consistently with their views of loyalty to the truth from the patristic standard.

III. Specially illustrative of this point are those parts of the Baptismal service in our Book of Common Prayer to which exception is taken by many faithful brethren as irreconcilable with the prevailing tenor of the church's teaching. To make this plain it will be necessary to glance at the early history of the doctrine of baptismal grace. Next in order to the apostolic Fathers, whose writings contain very little on the subject, the first in our catena of witnesses is Justin Martyr, who writes: "As in our first birth we were born in sin, without our own knowledge and of necessity, so we should receive in the water of baptism remission of all our former sins, and no longer remain children of necessity and ignorance, but become (through baptism) children of choice and knowledge."

IRENÆUS designates baptism as "regeneration unto God," and the commission given to the Apostles to baptize as "the power of regeneration," and all who are baptized, "infants and children, young men and old men" as "born anew by Christ unto God." (Ap. i. 18.)

"Happy" exclaims TERTULLIAN, "the sacrament of our water, whereby being cleansed from the sins of our former blindness, we are made free unto eternal life. Water first brought forth that which had life; so that there may be no wonder if in baptism the waters should be life-giving. The nature of water, sanctified by the Holy One, itself also received the power of sanctifying. (Bapt. i. 3-4.)

CLEMENT, of Alexandria: "Christ forms man from the dust, regenerates him with water, gives him increase by the Spirit. Being baptized we are illuminated, being illuminated we are adopted as sons, being adopted we are perfected, being perfect we are rendered immortal. By bap-

tism we are washed from all our sins, the punishment due to our sins is remitted."

ORIGEN follows up the teaching of his master: "Children are baptized for the remission of their sins. By the sacrament of baptism the uncleanness of our birth is put away; hence even infants are baptized."

To the same effect CYPRIAN: "All who come to the divine laver, by the sanctification of baptism put off the old man by grace of the saving laver, and being renewed by the Holy Spirit are purged of the filth of the old contagion by a second birth. From baptism all faith takes its origin, and thence is opened the entrance to eternal life."

"Great," says CYRIL, of Jerusalem, addressing candidates for baptism, "great is the baptism which is set before you: liberty to the captives; remission of sins; death of sin; regeneration of the soul; garment of light, holy seal, indissoluble—procuring for us the Kingdom of Heaven; the free gift for the adoption of sons. By baptism the sting of death is destroyed. Thou descendest into the water dead in sins; thou risest again quickened in righteousness."

"He who is baptized," says ATHANASIUS, "puts off the old man and is renewed, being born again of the grace of the Spirit."

AMBROSE speaks of baptism as "the salutary laver by which infants are reformed from a wicked state (mortalitas) to the primitive state in which they were created."

"God," says CHRYSOSTOM, "pardons and releases from sin in the laver of regeneration. As when iron or gold is recast, it is made pure and new again; so the Holy Spirit, recasting the soul in baptism, as in a furnace, consumes its sins, and makes it shine with more purity than the purest gold."

The views of AUGUSTINE are expressed in such a variety of forms that amid some appearance of inconsistency, of

which advantage has been taken to involve his meaning in uncertainty,* his doctrine is too plain to be mistaken. That, according to Augustine, the grace conferred in baptism is spiritual regeneration in the highest sense of that term, implying the remission of sin, and that moral purification which qualifies for Heaven, is shown by the quotations following: "Children not regenerated (*i. e.* baptized) are assigned when they die to eternal death, the regenerated to eternal life. Infants when they die, either by the merit of regeneration, pass over from the evil to the good, or by the desert of original sin pass over from the good to the evil." "In infants born and not yet baptized Adam may be recognized; in infants born and baptized and hence born again, Christ may be recognized. Baptized infants are believing infants—baptized in Christ, though infants, they are members of Christ, partakers of his sacraments, that they may have life in them. By baptism they are incorporated into the Church, that is, are joined to the body and members of it—a union without which salvation is impossible. They can be freed from the taint of original sin only by baptism. They cannot believe when baptized; therefore the response of others is sufficient for their consecration. In Cornelius spiritual sanctification preceded the sacrament of regeneration; but in baptized infants, the sacrament of regeneration precedes; and if it hold fast christian piety, conversion in heart will follow, the sacrament of which preceded in body. In baptized infants, though they know it not, dwells the Holy Spirit; sanctified by the sacrament of Christ, regenerated by the Holy Ghost, they belong to the temple of God."

In maintaining the necessity of infant baptism, Augustine teaches that while the infant has not "that faith which consists in the will of the believer, yet the sacrament of that faith makes it a believer. As response is

*Faber, Prim. Doct. Regen., I. vii. Mozley, *Bapt. Regen.* c. iv.; and *Rev. Bapt. Controv.* P. I. c. xiii.

made for it that it believes—the Church representing, by means of the sponsors, the faith of the child—it is accordingly called a believer; and if it comes to mature age, the sacrament is not repeated, but the child is taught to understand it, and embrace the truth with the act of his will. Until this take place, the sacrament acts as a protection against the powers of evil, and as there is as yet no tendency of the consciousness opposed to faith (*non obicem contrariæ cogitationis opponit*), the child is freed by baptism from condemnation, and should it die before the use of reason, would be saved through the sacrament, accompanied as it is with the good will of the Church, (*commendante ecclesiæ caritate*.)

Thus, according to the Augustinian theory, the grace of regeneration invariably accompanies the administration of the sacrament in the case of infants, who can oppose no bar to its efficacy. Yet inasmuch as to the *elect* alone, as distinguished from the regenerate, is vouchsafed the gift of final perseverance, the baptismal blessing may, in adult years, be forfeited through unfaithfulness, and the (non-elect) child of God, made such in baptism, and even as an adult “converted in heart,” endued with faith, and living piously for years, become the child of the wicked one, and finally perish.

IV. Not without significance is the fact that at this point of its development the patristic doctrine of baptismal grace is now first incorporated, as a distinct article of the faith, in the Nicæno-Constantinopolitan Creed (A. D. 381):—“I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins”—an article interpreted by all the contemporary Fathers, Eastern and Western alike, with some diversity of statement, as expressive of the conveyance, in and through baptism, of the highest blessings of redemption.

V. Now when we proceed to compare the statements of the Fathers of the fourth century with the statements on the same subject of our Reformers in the six-

teenth, we are made aware not merely of a resemblance between them, but of a closeness of similarity little short of a perfect identity. The language of the two so widely separated periods is substantially one; the doctrine is essentially the same. This unity of doctrine, indeed, is one of the peculiar boasts of the fathers of the Anglican Reformation. They repeatedly declare it to have been their steadfast aim to adhere to the doctrine and discipline of the church of the first four centuries. "Even in his polemical treatises on the Eucharist, where CRANMER had the strongest temptation to employ unpatristic language, he is still true to his often repeated professions of adherence to the early church." And on the point before us, his faithful adherence to this principle is sufficiently illustrated by the following quotations: "A man baptized in water is, by the omnipotent working of God, spiritually regenerated and changed into a new man. It is the person baptized that is so regenerate that he is made a new creature. In baptism we receive not only the Spirit of Christ, but also Christ himself, whole body and soul, manhood and Godhead, unto everlasting life. This is done in baptism in respect of Regeneration. As Christ is in his Supper present to feed us, so is he in baptism present to clothe and apparel us with his own self. In baptism Christ himself cometh down upon the child and appareleth him with his own self. As the priest putteth his hand to the child, outwardly, and washeth him with water, so must we think that God putteth His hand inwardly and washeth this infant with the Holy Spirit.

Equally clear are the words of RIDLEY: "In baptism the body is washed with the visible water, and the soul is cleansed from all filth by the invisible Holy Ghost; and yet the water ceaseth not to be water, but keepeth the nature of water still. The sacrament hath not grace included in it, but to those that receive it well it is turned to grace. After that manner the water in baptism hath

grace promised, and by that grace the Holy Spirit is given; not that grace is included in water, but that grace cometh by water." (Works, 240, 275).

To the same effect BRADFORD: "In baptism is given unto us the Holy Ghost and pardon of our sins, which yet lie not lurking in the water. By baptism 'the old man is put off,' and 'the new man put on,' yea '*Christ put on,*' but without transubstantiation of the water; and even so it is in the Lord's Supper." (I, 89.)

Thus also the Book of HOMILIES: "As for the number of the sacraments expressly commanded in the New Testament, whereunto is annexed the promise of free forgiveness of our sin, and of our holiness and joining in Christ, there be but two; namely, baptism and the supper of the Lord. For although absolution hath the promise of forgiveness of sin, yet by the express word of the New Testament it hath not this promise *annexed and tied to the visible sign*, which is imposition of hands." (Book II, ix.)

"We be therefore washed in our baptism from the filthiness of sin, that we should live afterward in the pureness of life." (*Ibid.* xiii).

"Infants, being baptized and dying in their infaney, are by this sacrifice (of Christ) washed from their sins, brought to God's favor, and made his children, and inheritors of his kingdom of heaven. And they which in act or deed do sin after their baptism, when they turn again to God unfeignedly, they are likewise washed by this sacrifice from their sins." (B. I, iii).

"We must trust only in God's merey, and that sacrifice which our high priest and Saviour Christ Jesus, the Son of God, once offered for us upon the cross, to obtain thereby God's grace and *remission, as well of our original sin in baptism*, as of all actual sin committed by us after baptism, if we truly repent, and turn unfeignedly to him again." (*Ibid.*)

Bishop JEWEL: "For this cause are infants baptized,

because they are born in sin, and cannot become spiritual but by this new birth of water and the Spirit." (II, 1004.)

So, also, HOOKER: "Baptism is the door of our actual entrance into God's house, *the first apparent beginning of life*, a seal perhaps to the grace of election before received; but to our sanctification here a step which hath not any before it." (V, 60.)

The chain of concordant teaching on this point is preserved unbroken through the 17th century in the writings of JACKSON, JEREMY TAYLOR, and BP. PEARSON.

VI. As to the sense in which the Anglican Fathers employ the term *regeneration*, their own definitions leave no room for any pretence of doubtfulness.

Thus BECON: "What is it to be baptized with the Holy Ghost? It is to be *regenerated*, to be born anew, to be made of earthly heavenly, of carnal spiritual, of the bond slaves of the devil the sons of God." (*Cat.* 262.)

BRADFORD: "The regenerate, in that, and inasmuch as they be regenerate, that, I say, they have *pure will according to the nature of the Spirit of God regenerating them*. So that as their corrupt nature hath his corrupt affections, which never will be subject, nor can be, to God's law; so the regenerate man hath his *pure affection which never can or will sin against God*." (I, 250.)

HOOPER: "This Holy Spirit dwelling in us through his grace and virtue doth *regenerate us unto a newness and change of living*, mortifying in us all that is of us and of the old man, of the flesh and of the world, and quickening all that is His in us, so that we live not thenceforth after our own lusts, but according to the will of God." (II, 39.)

NEWELL: "But whence have we *Regeneration*? None other way but from the death and resurrection of Christ. For by the force of Christ's death, our old man is, after a certain manner, crucified and mortified, and the corruptness of our nature is, as it were, buried, that it no more live and be strong in us." (*Cat.* 181.)

DAVENANT: "I call him *regenerated* who is raised from the death of sin, and quickened by the all-powerful operation of the Holy Spirit. On the other hand, I call him *unregenerate*, who has not yet attained to this spiritual quickening, however he may have been affected by some preceding operations of the Holy Spirit. The word *Regeneration* either denotes the very first act, whereby spiritual life (as though by a creative act) is infused into man, and so is affected in a moment; or else a continued act of the Spirit whereby the new powers and qualities breathed into him, together with this life are increased and strengthened; and so it is accomplished by degrees, and that not without the wrestlings and strivings of the regenerate person himself." (*Determ.* IX.)

VII. But against this interpretation of the language of the Reformers, it is alleged that the identity of their statements with those of the early fathers on the subject of baptismal grace, fails to prove the identity of their doctrine—that the Reformers *could not* have held that all baptized infants are regenerated, inasmuch as they all held the doctrine of Calvin concerning the indefectibility of grace, and hence *must* have held that only *elect* infants are regenerated in baptism. Not, however, to insist upon the undoubted fact that the scheme of doctrine accepted by the earlier Reformers is distinctively *Augustinian* rather than Calvinistic, this objection is at once set aside by adverting to the no less indubitable fact, that on the question of the final perseverance of the regenerate, the statements of the Anglican Fathers, imply their adoption of a *middle* theory—a theory on which their different and apparently conflicting utterances respecting *the means of regeneration* are easily harmonized. For a clear statement of the doctrine of our Reformers on this point, we are indebted to one of the ablest of their legitimate lineal decendants in theology, Bishop DAVENANT: "It is not necessary that sacraments should work *all* that they

represent in that very moment of time in which they are administered. In infants the very want of reason, as far as its exercise is concerned, is an impediment that prevents their having actual faith, or the actual desire of mortification. Nevertheless, as all baptized infants are absolved from the guilt of original sin, they may, on this account, be said to be, *as infants* regenerated, justified and adopted. And yet the justification, regeneration and adoption, which we grant to belong to baptized infants, are not identically the same with the justification, etc., which *in the question concerning the Perseverance of the Saints*, we have maintained is never lost. Nor is that which is called the regeneration of a little child of the same kind with this new creation, or *spiritual new birth of adults which we maintain to be never totally destroyed or lost* after it has once been produced in the heart of a regenerate person by the power of the Spirit. A christian infant who is regenerated in baptism acquires another regeneration when, as an adult, he believes the gospel. Therefore, either he is twice regenerated, or this baptismal regeneration is not the same with that of adults, of which James says: "Of his own will begot he us of the word of truth," (i. 18,) and Peter: "Being born again, etc., (1 Pet. i. 23.) The finally lost, do not perish because they have lost the sacramental regeneration suitable for infants; but because they have never had that other regeneration from the seed of the word, and the efficacy of the Holy Spirit, which is necessary to effect the regeneration of adults. That which by the Divine appointment is sufficient for the salvation of the infant ceases to be sufficient for the salvation of the adult, who is justified and regenerated only by repenting and believing, and thus fulfilling his baptismal vow."

VIII. It is however in those parts of the Baptismal service against which, as we have said, the most serious objections have been alleged, that the identity of statement

upon which we insist as implying identity of doctrine, is more particularly noticeable, viz., the post-baptismal Address and Thanksgiving; both, strange to say, composed by the compilers of the *reformed* office, and both first inserted in the *revised* or *Second Book of Edward* (1552).

It is indeed not a little remarkable that there is nothing corresponding to the Address and Thanksgiving in the offices (of Sarum and Cologne) from which the Anglican is largely drawn. There is indeed nothing exactly corresponding to them in any preceding office. The nearest approach to a correspondence in form is found in the monuments of the Ancient Gallican Church. (Quoted by Palmer, *Orig., Lit.*, II. 193.)

IX. More remarkable still is the fact—a fact to which the writer has nowhere met with any explicit reference—that in the First Reformed Book of Common Prayer (1549), in the place now occupied by the Address and Thanksgiving is found the post-baptismal Prayer, word for word, almost, as it occurs in the *Roman* office. It is as follows: “Almighty God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath regenerated thee by water and the Holy Ghost, and hath given unto thee remission of all thy sins; He (Himself) vouchsafe to anoint thee with the unction of the Holy Spirit (with the chrism of salvation, Rom. Off.), and bring thee to the inheritance of everlasting life.”

This formula, the only part of the Roman office which directly affirms the regeneration of the infant newly baptized was transferred by the compilers into the Reformed office, without essential change, simply, it would appear, because they saw no reason for omitting it. As between Romanist and Anglican, on the subject of baptismal grace, there was as yet no question. The first Reformers, Lutheran and Anglican alike,—whatever may be said of the Zwinglian and Calvinistic—professedly adopted on this point the received teaching of the Western Church.

Thus the IXth article of the Augsburg Confession, “on Baptism,” is expressly commended by the *Papal Confutation* as altogether unexceptionable; and Melancthon, in the *Apology of the Confession*, accepts the papal commendation as well and justly bestowed. And here it is especially noteworthy that in a publication issued as late as 1565, from the pen of Stapleton, the noted antagonist of Jewel, containing a careful exposition of the points of difference in doctrine and discipline between the Church of Rome and the Church of England, the author enumerates twenty-two distinct heads of controversy; and yet in this enumeration, which professes to be exhaustive, the question of baptismal grace, or indeed any doctrine concerning baptism, finds no place.

X. In the light of this fact, that there was no controversy between Rome and our Reformers respecting the grace of baptism, it appears perfectly natural that the framers of the Reformed office should have adopted, as they did, the Roman Formula, which expresses in general terms the doctrine then received by Romanist and Protestant alike.* [And what, it is here pertinent to ask, in the presence of this simple fact, becomes of all those more or less plausible interpretations which have, in *later days*, been devised for the purpose of reducing the language of the office into some sort of harmony with anti-Romanistic, or a more or less Evangelical scheme of doctrine?]

XI. But more than this: “It is truly remarkable,” as Bishop Browne has pointed out “that Cranmer, instead of maintaining lower ground than the Romanists on baptismal grace, maintains rather higher ground; for

*The point of difference in regard to the nature of “concupiscence” may be explained as rather a dispute about the meaning of the term than any real question as to the nature or extent of the baptismal blessing; Romanist and Protestant alike holding that concupiscence “remains in the regenerate,” the former denying, the latter affirming that it is an “infection of nature,” and “that it hath of itself the nature of sin.”

the Romanist divines were inclined to derogate from the dignity of baptism, in order the more to elevate the importance of the communion." (On Art. xxvii.) And accordingly, when, after an interval of three years, Cranmer and his associates came to revise the office, they proceeded to replace the simple affirmation, in the language of prayer, as in the Roman ritual, that the baptized infant is "regenerated by water and the Holy Ghost," with the much stronger dogmatic affirmation, as we now have it, in two distinct forms, that the newly baptized infant is "now," as a matter of fact regenerate, and that the regeneration, here and now effected, has been effected by the Holy Ghost. In the use of this office, as revised by the Reformers, the officiating minister who baptizes an infant is made to declare that while he is in the act of washing the infant's body with water, the Spirit of God sanctifies the infant's soul.

XII. But this interpretation, we shall be told, fixes upon the office the theory of the *opus operatum*, a theory repudiated by all the Reformers, Anglican and Lutheran, as well as Zwinglian and Calvinistic. True, the *opus operatum* was repudiated by all the Reformers; but in which of the several senses of that expression was it repudiated by them? The obvious answer is, doubtless in that meaning of it with which they were familiar in the writings of the school-men. Thus in the xxvith of the xlii articles is found an express condemnation of the *opus operatum*; but these articles were put forth fourteen years prior to the publication of the Roman Catechism, in which was first set forth an authoritative exposition of the Roman dogma. In the revised articles of 1562, all reference to the *opus operatum* is omitted—an omission due it would appear, to the explanations which had, in the meantime, been made of the expression in the discussions of the Council of Trent—explanations doing away much of its offensive import. Of like significance is the change introduced in 1562, in the xxiiird article. Here various

dogmas described in the article of 1552, as "the doctrine of the *school-authors*," (scholastic orum) are in the article of 1562, designated as "*Romish doctrine*," now so named, doubtless, as having in the meantime been defined by the Tridentine Council.

Now, the scholastics of the middle or later age, write of the sacraments in terms that imply their magical efficacy as instruments of moral purification, employing the term *opus operatum*, as they do, to signify the supernatural power inherent, either in the outward element itself (the more common view,) or in the sacrament (matter and form) taken as a whole, in contradistinction to the *opus operans*—the inward good disposition, or subjective qualification (*bonus motus*) whether of the administrator or of the recipient. According to this theory, the full baptismal blessing is conferred upon the subject of the sacrament without respect to any moral qualification whatever. Thus Paludanus (1300) quoted by Chemnitz*: It is not required in the sacraments of the New Testament that men should be properly disposed. The becoming disposition is effected by means of the sacrament itself; and this is to confer grace *ex opere operato*. So also, Gabriel Biel: "A sacrament is said to confer grace *ex opere operato*; because if there is an outward exhibition of the sign employed an inward good disposition is not required in the receiver." (Ib. and Davenant, Determ. xxiii.)

XIII. That *this* is that dogma of the efficacy of baptism *ex opere operato* which is explicitly condemned by the Reformers, is placed beyond question, by their own express declarations. Thus the *Reformatio Legum*: "Some have maintained that by virtue of the word of God and of prayer, the water was in a sort *transubstantiated* into the Holy Ghost; or at the least that the Holy Ghost was concomitant with, lurking in, brooding upon the water, in such manner as, *ex opere operato*, and in the nature of a

*Examen. Conc. Trident.

physical operation, to be *applied* to the baptized person by the action of dipping or sprinkling.” (Tit. ii. 18.)

Thus also JEWEL: “Augustine saith there were some in his time that taught that if a man had been baptized, and had once received the sacrament, notwithstanding he lived wickedly, yet he could not be condemned, only because he was baptized, etc., which thing now is called *opus operatum*.

“Chrysostom saith: ‘Women and young children for great safety hang the gospel at their necks, thinking the gospel itself, and of itself, could save them, not because they believed in it, but only because it was hanged about them; and this also is *opus operatum*. Thus they expound their own dream: *ex opere operato*, is as much as to say that the very sacrament itself, only because it is ministered, is sufficient, although the receiver be utterly void of faith.’” (II. 750.)

XIV. Not a few of our own writers have attempted to fix the same doctrine upon the modern Church of Rome. It must, however, in all candor be admitted that whatever individual theologians in her communion may have taught, that Church is to be held to no other statements than those which are embodied in her acknowledged doctrinal standards—the Decrees and Canons and Catechism of the Council of Trent.

Now, the VIIIth Canon of the viith session, reads as follows: “If any one say that grace is not conferred by the sacraments themselves of the new law, *ex opere operato*, but that faith alone in the Divine promise, is sufficient to obtain grace; let him be anathema. Here, it will be observed, the *opus operatum* is set over against, or placed in contradistinction to, not *all* subjective graces, or *any* spiritual qualification whatever, but only to “*faith alone*.” And that it is not the meaning of the Canon that no such qualification is necessary, appears from the fuller statement in “Canon VI.” viz.: “If any one say that the sacraments of the new law do not *contain* the grace which

they signify, or that they do not confer the grace itself upon those *who do not offer any hindrance*, (or interpose a bar—*obicem*, to its operation,) as if they were *only external signs* of the grace or righteousness received by faith and marks of Christian profession, by which believers are distinguished from unbelievers, let him be anathema.”

The single point of difference here brought out between the Roman doctrine of sacramental grace, and the Anglican doctrine is this viz.: That, while according to the former, the sacraments both *contain* and confer grace, according to the latter, they *confer*, but do not contain. Whatever may be the thought of the importance of this difference as it respects the Eucharist, it must be acknowledged that so far as the sacrament of baptism is concerned, the difference is reduced to a minimum, by the explanation of the Roman doctors that the sacraments are said to “*contain*” the grace which they confer, simply as *instrumental causes*, depending for their efficacy upon the principal cause, God alone, who operates through them, and is Himself in such a sense, the principal cause of grace that He is able to confer it without the sacraments.

This is further shown in part III of the Roman Catechism: “Infants when baptized, receive the mysterious gifts of faith; not that they believe by the assent of their own minds but because they are protected by the faith of their parents, if their parents be of the faithful; if not, by the faith of the universal society of the saints. For we rightly say that they are presented for baptism by all those to whom their initiation in that sacred rite is pleasing, and by whose charity they are united into the communion of the Holy Spirit.” (C. II. Q. xxxii.)

XV. Such is the Romish doctrine of the *opus operatum*, as it regards the baptism of infants. As it respects the baptism of adults, the point is clearly stated in the Catechism thus:—“Persons of adult age, born of infidel

parents, if they be converted to the Lord, should be taught that their perfect conversion consists in regeneration by baptism. Their baptism nevertheless is to be deferred, that their intentions in seeking it may be better examined and ascertained; and that they may be better instructed in the doctrine of the faith which they are to profess, and in the practice of a Christian life. And should any sudden accident prevent them from being laved in the water of salvation, their intention and determination to receive it, and their repentance for their previous ill-spent life will avail them unto grace and justification (though dying unbaptized.)”

The requisites for the due reception of adult baptism are thus enumerated: “I. Desire and purpose to receive baptism. II. Faith. III. Repentance for past transgressions, and a fixed determination to refrain from all sins in the future. And although so far as regards the sacrament, if, whilst he is being duly baptized, the adult intends at heart to receive what the Church administers, he validly receives the sacrament, yet, if we regard sanctifying and saving grace, we are well aware that by him who purposes to live according to the flesh and not according to the Spirit, baptism is received in vain, and is void.” (Q. xxxii. *sq.*)

Fully accordant with these authoritative definitions is the exposition of *Bellarmino*: “The efficacy of the sacrament *ex opere operato* implies the concurrence of a number of particulars, viz: on the part of God, the appointment of the outward and visible sign; on the part of Christ, his passion; on the part of the minister, will, power, probity; *on the part of the recipient, will, faith and penitence*; and on the part of the sacrament, the external action itself, which consists of the due application of the matter and the form. Now of all these that which actively, and proximately, and instrumentally effects the grace of justification is the external action alone, which is named a sacrament, and this

is called *opus operatum*. So that to say the sacrament confers grace *ex opere operato* were the same as to say, the sacrament confers grace *by virtue of the sacramental act itself* instituted by God for this end, not by the merit of the agent or recipient.

“Will, faith and penitence are necessarily required in the adult recipient, *as dispositions* on the part of the subject, not as active causes; for faith and penitence do not effect sacramental grace, or give efficacy to the sacrament, but only remove obstacles which hinder its exercise. Hence, infants in whom disposition is not required, receive the grace of the sacrament without will, faith and penitence.” (*De Sac.* II. c. 1.)

XVI. With this statement of the Roman doctrine, let us compare the Anglican, as it is set forth in the office for adult baptism. According to the former, as we have seen, “will, faith and penitence” on the part of the candidate are necessarily prerequisite to the reception of the baptismal blessing in its sanctifying efficacy. According to the latter, “repentance and faith” on the part of the recipient are necessary conditions of the grace of the sacrament—a grace defined as consisting in “a death into sin, and a new birth into righteousness,” an accurate definition of regeneration in the comprehensive sense of the term, as inclusive of justification and renewal; a grace further defined as “remission of sins by spiritual regeneration,” and as “the being washed and sanctified by the Holy Ghost.” The candidate for baptism, while supposed to be already truly penitent and believing, is supposed, at the same time to be in a state of unpardoned sin, without the gift of the Holy Ghost, in a word “a child of wrath.” Coming to baptism in penitence and faith, prayer is offered for him that “the old Adam may be so buried, that the new man may be raised up in him; that he may receive remission of his sins by spiritual regeneration; that he may receive the Holy Ghost, that he may be born again.”

Having been baptized, he is at once pronounced “regenerate, and grafted into the body of Christ’s Church,” that is to say, by means of baptism made a “living member” of Christ’s mystical body. For that such is here the meaning of the expression, “the body of Christ’s Church,” is plain from the limiting clause in the XXVII Article which affirms that it is they that “receive baptism *rightly*” that “are grafted into the Church—a limitation which, by excluding the impenitent from the Church, determines the application in this place of the expression, “the body of Christ’s Church,” to “the mystical body of Christ—the blessed company of all faithful people.”

XVII. The language of the office thus clearly implies that repentance and faith, are separable from the remission of sins, and may justly be ascribed to the sinner while yet in a state of condemnation. But the received evangelical doctrine as embodied in the Confessions of the Churches of the Reformation, is, that repentance and faith are inseparable from remission of sins, as remission of sins is inseparable from regeneration; that the moment a man truly repents and believes, that moment he receives remission of sins, and becomes a child of God by spiritual regeneration; or, to change the order, that at one and the same time that he is spiritually regenerated, he is also justified.

XVIII. How then are we to harmonize the doctrine of the Ritual on this point, with the doctrine of XIth Article of the Confession—“We are justified by Faith only?” Is it by adopting the scholastic distinction between a “faith unformed” before baptism which is not justifying, and a “faith formed” by love, in and through baptism, and, as such justifying? Is there any other mode of reconciliation possible? If justification be inseparably connected with baptism, as the office teaches, how can we be said to be *justified by faith only*, as the article declares, save on the one supposition that the faith which

is the sole instrument of justification is bestowed by God only in baptism; and therefore, that the faith of the Catechumen required as a qualification for baptism, is nothing more or less than the *fides informis*, call it by what name we will, of the mediæval or Romish theory?

If this distinction be rejected, as anti-Scriptural, and in contradiction to the plain meaning of the Article, the conclusion, however unwelcome, is inevitable, that the office for the "Ministration of Baptism to such as are of riper years" is framed upon a theory of sacramental grace inconsistent with the thoroughly evangelical tenor of our Liturgy and Articles of Religion.

